

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

to acknowledge the debt, to consider the preceding generation as having had a right to eat up the whole soil of their country, in the course of a life, to alienate it from them (for it would be an alienation to the creditors), and would they think themselves either legally or morally bound to give up their country and emigrate to another for subsistence? Every one will say no; that the soil is the gift of God to the living, as much as it had been to the deceased generation; and that the laws of nature impose no obligation on them to pay this debt. And although, like some other natural rights, this has not yet entered into any declaration of rights, it is no less a law, and ought to be acted on by honest governments. It is, at the same time, a salutary curb on the spirit of war and indebtedness, which, since the modern theory of the perpetuation of debt, has drenched the earth with blood, and crushed its inhabitants under burthens ever accumulating. Had this principle been declared in the British bill of rights, England would have been placed under the happy disability of waging eternal war, and of contracting her thousand millions of public debt. In seeking, then, for an ultimate term for the redemption of our debts, let us rally to this principle, and provide for their payment within the term of nineteen years at the farthest. (To J. W. Eppes, 1813. C. VI., 136-138.)

DEMOCRACY.—The influence over government must be shared by all the people. If every individual which composes their mass participates of the ultimate authority, the government will be safe; because the corrupting the whole mass will exceed any private resources of wealth; and public ones cannot be provided but by levies on the whole people. In this case every man would have to pay his own price. * * * It has been thought that corruption is restrained by confining the right of suffrage to a few of the wealthier people; but it would be more effectually restrained by an extension of that right to such numbers as would bid defiance to means of corruption. (From "Notes on Virginia," 1782. F. III., 255.)

DEMOCRACY.—There is a snail-paced gait for the advance of new ideas in the general mind, under which we must acquiesce.